

DEMOCRATIC WHIP TASK FORCE ON POVERTY, INCOME INEQUALITY, AND OPPORTUNITY

CHAIR, CONGRESSWOMAN BARBARA LEE

DEMOCRATIC WHIP TASK FORCE ON POVERTY, INCOME INEQUALITY, AND OPPORTUNITY 2015 YEAR IN REVIEW

Dear Friends of the Task Force,

This year marked another year of work to raise awareness among Members and the public of the ongoing crisis of poverty in our nation. The Task Force, which now includes 103 Members, has met frequently with key stakeholders, advocates, and Administration officials over the course of 2015 to discuss strategies to eliminate poverty and meet our goal of cutting poverty in half by 2023.

From leaders like Center for American Progress President Neera Tanden and Martin Luther King III to

Administration officials, including Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Julian Castro and Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack, we have provided a number of opportunities for Members to meet with partners to address poverty in communities across the country. We've also worked to secure guests from organizations that have made significant global strides in poverty reduction and apply their best practices for poverty reduction domestically.

Moreover, the Task Force has also hosted a number of events to discuss economic challenges, including a panel at the Congressional Black Caucus's Annual Legislative Conference to discuss wealth disparities and criminal justice, as well as a press conference on a Joint Economic Committee report on challenges faced by the African American community with a focus on the school-to-prison pipeline.

The Task Force has worked this year to defend the most vulnerable Americans from Republican attempts to put the burden of deficit reduction on them, to take away health care coverage from millions, and other efforts to undermine their ability to access the opportunities that make the American Dream possible.

At the same time, our Task Force has put forward our own proposals to help Americans get out of poverty. At the beginning of the year, we introduced H.R. 258, the Half in Ten Act, which would create a national strategy to cut poverty in half over the next decade, providing a leg up to more than 22 million Americans who are struggling economically. In addition, members of the Task Force introduced H.R. 2721, the Pathways out of Poverty Act, which would expand and improve critical anti-poverty programs from housing, unemployment insurance, job training, education, and nutrition assistance. And we've supported critical policy proposals such

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Chaired by Congresswoman Barbara Lee ♦ 2015 Year in Review



MAJOR ACTIONS

Panel at CBC Legislative Conference on Wealth Disparities and Criminal Justice
CBC/JEC Press Conference on Economic Challenges in the Black Community
Special Order on Poverty in America

LEGISLATION

H.R. 258, the Half in Ten Act
H.R. 2721, the Pathways out of
Poverty Act

LETTERS



Dear Colleague on Census Poverty Numbers
Letter to Appropriations Committee in Support of
Anti-Poverty Programs
Letter to Speaker Ryan on Poverty and Inequality
Dear Colleague Urging Members to Hold Events on
Poverty and Opportunity

STAFF BRIEFINGS

Briefing on 2014 U.S. Census
Briefing on JEC report on the
African American Community and
School to Prison Pipeline

MEETING GUESTS

Neera Tanden, President, Center for American Progress
Julian Castro, Secretary of Housing and Urban Development
Martin Luther King III
Senator Elizabeth Warren (MA)
Tom Vilsack, Secretary of Agriculture

as Assistant Leader Clyburn's 10-20-30 approach to poverty reduction that would direct at least 10 percent of any recovery efforts into communities with 20 percent poverty rates for 30 years.

In addition to introducing and supporting critical anti-poverty legislation, we've also spent a majority of the year providing robust services to members of our Task Force, such as sending weekly poverty news clips and reports, hosting timely and informational staff briefings, providing constituent poverty data, and serving as a liaison between departments for critical grant opportunities.

After a new Speaker was elected in October, we wrote to him asking that he work with us on measures that will have a real and positive impact for America's most vulnerable. While we are encouraged that Speaker Ryan has acknowledged the persistent problem of poverty and the need to address it with the seriousness it deserves, the proposals he has offered have been partisan and unrealistic. We should work together on a bipartisan basis to pass measures that can improve conditions for Americans living poverty. We will continue to pursue potential areas of compromise in the next session of the 114th Congress, and look forward to partnering with our Members, the Administration, and key stakeholders to continue our work to help lift our most vulnerable out of poverty and into the middle class.

For more information on the Task Force, please visit our website at www.democraticwhip.gov/povertytaskforce or contact [Javier Martinez](#) (Hoyer) at or [Emma Mehrabi](#) (Lee) in our offices.

Sincerely yours,

Democratic Whip Steny H. Hoyer

Democratic Whip Task Force on Poverty, Income Inequality, and Opportunity Chair, Barbara Lee

POVERTY TASK FORCE NEWS:

- [Hoyer, Lee Statement on White House Council of Economic Advisors' Nutrition Assistance Report](#)
- [Acting Education Secretary Meets with Democratic Whip Task Force on Poverty, Income Inequality, and Opportunity](#)
- [Hoyer, Lee Send Letter to Speaker Ryan About the Need to Address Poverty, Income Inequality](#)
- [Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack Meets with Hoyer, Lee, Democratic Whip Task Force on Poverty, Income Inequality, and Opportunity](#)
- [Martin Luther King III Meets with Democratic Whip Task Force on Poverty, Income Inequality, and Opportunity](#)
- [HUD Secretary Castro Meets with Democratic Whip Task Force on Poverty, Income Inequality, and Opportunity](#)
- [Hoyer, Lee Commend CBO Report Highlighting Damaging Effects of SNAP Cuts on Low Income Households](#)
- [District Work Period Event Ideas on the Importance of Anti-Poverty Programs and Economic Opportunity](#)

WHAT WE'RE READING:

- [Washington Post: I've worked for five decades but still need food stamps to get by](#)
- [The Atlantic: When Education Wasn't Enough](#)

FROM THE ADMINISTRATION & STAKEHOLDERS:

- White House Report: [Long-Term Benefits of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program](#)
- White House Blog: [Income, Poverty, and Health insurance in the United States in 2014](#)
- Economic Policy Institute: [The Increasingly Unequal America](#)
- Annie E. Casey Foundation: [2015 Kids Count Data Book](#)
- CBPP: [Safety Net More Effective Against Poverty Than Previously Thought](#)